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ABSTRACT

Results of a study based on earlier research, which showed that the amount of research published by faculty is one indicator of the quality of an individual faculty member and the entire faculty of a department, are reported in this paper. It reports (1) the amount of research published by members of speech communication departments in major speech communication journals and one speech communication yearbook for the years 1981-1983, and (2) the amount of research published by graduate students in speech communication publications. Results of this study discussed in the paper indicated that the amount of research published by members of a speech communication department changes over time and is also related to the terminal degree offered by the department. The paper offers suggestions for future research, including efforts to rate the quality of the journals. Tables of findings are included. (Author/DF)

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Research/Publication Productivity of Speech Communication Departments: 1981-1983

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Running Head: Research

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Abstract

The amount of research published by faculty is one indicator of the quality of an individual faculty member and the entire faculty of a department. This paper objectifies this indicator by reporting the amount of research published by members of speech communication departments in major speech communication journals and one speech communication yearbook for the years 1981-1983. The paper also reports the amount of research published by graduate students in speech communication publications. Results indicated that the amount of research published by the members of a speech communication department changes over time and is also related to the terminal degree offered by the department. Suggestions for future research include efforts to rate the quality of the journals.

Faculty at larger educational institutions are expected to publish as well as teach and perform service. Publication records are used not only to evaluate individual faculty members, but also may be used as an indicator of overall faculty quality. Two recent studies (Barker, Hall, Roach, & Underberg, 1979; McCallum, 1984) have quantified the productivity of speech communication departments through 1980. This particular study extends the conclusions of these studies.

This study will investigate three research questions. First, previous studies have proportionally divided credit for articles with multiple authors. Since the position of an author's name in a list of authors should indicate relative contribution to the project, this proportional division of credit may not be reasonable. Thus, this study will use both proportional and weighted systems of assigning authorship credit to determine whether these two systems yield different conclusions.

Second, this study will attempt to determine the volitility of the productivity of departments over time. The time frame of this study does not overlap either of the previous studies in the communication discipline. Further, as McCallum (1984) did in her study, the list of journals will differ somewhat, but not substantially, from the journals studied by others. This methodology can determine whether publication productivity is independent of publication source and time.

Third, since the vast majority of departments whose members publish frequently offer advanced degrees, this study will rank departments on the number of publications produced by students. This information should be useful to potential graduate students because publication early in one's career is considered important in hiring, tenure, and promotion decisions.

Methods

Journals

This study recorded the institutional affiliation of the authors of articles dealing with speech communication topics, as opposed to mass communication topics, in ten journals and one yearbook relevant to the speech communication field. The study was limited to the 1981-83 issues of these publications. The journals were chosen because they were indexed in Matlon's (1980) Index to Journals in Speech Communication Studies through 1979. Specifically, the ten journals selected were the four regional journals (Western Journal of Speech Communication, Central States Speech Journal, Southern Speech Communication Journal, and Communication Quarterly), the three Speech Communication Association journals (Communication Monographs, Communication Education, and The Quarterly Journal of Speech), one International Communication Association journal (Human Communication Research), one forensics journal (The Journal of the American Forensics Association), and Philosophy and Rhetoric. The other journals indexed in Matlon were not included because they either publish mass communication articles or were not available. The yearbook selected was Communication Yearbook. This yearbook was selected because it publishes, for the most part, competitively selected convention papers that probably would be published in one of the selected journals if they were not published in the yearbook. This list differs somewhat, but not substantially, from the lists of publications included in other studies (Barker et al., 1979; McCallum, 1984).

Instrument

One point was recorded for each article in these publications that was on a speech communication rather than mass communication topic. To be considered a publication, the article needed to be at least two pages long and contain some evidence of scholarship such as source citations or statistical analysis. While research notes were included, book reviews and judge critiques were not. Although the judge critiques of the final round of the National Debate Tournament were not counted as articles, the editor of the transcript received credit for an article. Pieces in the Editor's Corner of JAFA and the Forum of QJS were counted as articles if they met the legnth and scholarship requirements. The placement of articles in these areas seemed to be due to a length and topic requirement in JAFA and the fact that an article was a response to a previous piece in QJS rather than a lack of scholarship.

Points were awarded only when the author was associated with a (speech) communication department at the time that the article was published. Directories of the SCA and ICA at the time that the article was published were used to clarify the academic affiliation of authors when that information was not provided. Points were also awarded when the author belonged to a department that had a title which was synonymous to communication. Examples of synonymous titles included the Department of Speech, the Department of Rhetoric, and the Department of Speech and Theatre. Points were not awarded when the author belonged to a Department of Mass Communication. The differentiation between (speech) communication and mass communication was made because institutions that support the bulk of the research in these fields generally have separated the communication and mass communication departments. Finally, points were awarded when the author was

from a department that included speech as an adjective in the title (e.g., Speech Education) or had an adjective modifying communication that indicated that the face-to-face aspect of communication was retained in the department (e.g., Organizational Communication).

Articles with multiple authorship were awarded one total point. Two methods were used to divide the point among the authors. First, the point was divided proportionally among the authors. With this method, then, each of the four authors of an article received .25 of a point. The second method proportionally distributed the point in the following manner: two authors--.6 point for the first author and .4 point for the second author; three authors--.5 point for the first author, .3 point for the second author, and .2 point for the third author; four authors--.5 point for the first author, .3 point for the second author, and .1 point for the third and fourth authors; five authors--.5 point for the first author, .2 point for the second author, and .1 point for the remaining authors. A weighted system was also used because the positioning of an author supposedly indicates the contribution that he/she made to the article. This particular weighted system reflected the approximate contributions of junior authors in research projects in which the author has worked with others.

Authorship points were awarded to the institution with which the author claimed to be affiliated. When the author claimed affiliation with two schools (e.g., graduate student at University A and Assistant Professor at University B or Professor at University C and Visiting Professor at University D), the point was awarded to the institution with which the affiliation appeared to be most permanent. In the above examples, the point was awarded to University B and University C, respectively. Separate records were kept for each campus of institutions that have multiple campuses. Thus,

Pennsylvania State University at University Park was differentiated from Penn State-Delaware County and separate records were maintained for the various branches of the State University of New York.

Using these methods, a total of 736.82 points were recorded. Authors were affiliated with 216 schools, but the 28 most active schools accounted for 48.7% (358.8) of the total points awarded. The total number of points awarded is not a whole number because some articles had both communication and non-communication authors. Points were awarded only to the authors from communication departments.

Results

The 28 most productive schools and the number of points that they were awarded are presented in Table 1. This table presents the data from the proportional system only. Data from the weighted system are not presented

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Insert Table 1 About Here

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because the results for the two systems, using the results for the productive departments listed on Table 1, were extremely highly correlated (r = .9988; rho = .998). While a random sample probably would reduce these correlations, this particular type of study is oriented toward validating the instrument for the more productive departments rather than for all departments. Thus, for comparison purposes, the point system similar to the previous studies was used for further data analyses.

The results of this study were compared to the results of other studies that measured the research productivity of communication departments. The results did not correlate highly with either the Barker et al.

(1979) study (rho = .157; t = .76, df = 23; NSD) or the McCallum (1984) study (rho = .161; t = .75; df = 22; NSD).[1] The McCallum and Barker et al. studies correlated somewhat more highly with one another than they did with this study (rho = .457; t = 2.41; df = 22; $p \leq .05$). It should be noted that these two studies overlapped in terms of the time period studied while neither of these studies overlapped with this study.

An additional consideration in determining the utility of a graduate program is the degree to which the program facilitates and encourages student publications. Students from 31 departments were responsible for 64.95 publication points. Table 2 presents the data for the Top 10 programs for graduate student publications, but 13 departments are listed because there was a five way tie for ninth place.[2]

Insert Table 2 About Here

Only one of these schools is not on the list of the most productive departments. All of these schools offer the Ph.D. degree. Of the 31 departments that had papers authored or co-authored by students, 27 offer the Ph.D., while the other four offer terminal master's degrees.

Discussion

There are several conclusions that might be drawn from this research. First, a weighted system for assigning partial points for co-authored articles does not change the results. While this is partially explained by the weighting system used in the study, it is also explained by the fact that co-authors tend to be affiliated with the same schools.

Second, it is clear that there is a good deal of volitility in the rankings for the three studies that have attempted to determine departmental

productivity on the basis of articles published. There are several possible explanations for this occurrence. First, schools might have one or two faculty members who are published frequently for a period of time but then quit publishing for that school. These authors might change jobs or perceive that they will no longer be adequately rewarded for publication. A second explanation is methodological. All three studies looked at different sets of publications. Although there is a good deal of overlap in publications among all the studies, the fact that each journal tends to have a different set of schools represented by their authors may have affected the results. On the other hand, while the rankings are somewhat volitile, the productive schools are also somewhat consistent. Of the 28 most productive departments in this study, 27 of them appeared on Barker et al.'s (1979) list of the 50 most productive schools. Third, Barker et al. did not limit their study to articles published by (speech) communication faculty in the communication journals, but both this study and the McCallum (1984) study imposed this limitation in their methodologies. This methodological difference may account for some of the inconsistency in the rankings.

Third, a surprisingly high percentage of the publication points earned by students were earned by those who either were single authors or senior authors on research teams. 40.66 of the 64.95 student publication points were earned in one of these two ways.

Fourth, there is a strong relationship between the existence of a graduate program and research by members of a department. All of the most productive departments offer an advanced degree and all the most productive departments for students offer the Ph.D.

There are also a number of limitations to this study, and, perhaps, any similar study. First, the volitility of the rankings suggests that the

knowledge gained by a study of this type may be dated as soon as it is completed. In particular, all studies of this type have assigned publication points to the institution with which the author(s) of an article was/were associated at the time the article was published. This methodology fails to consider job changes by the researchers. Future research might assign the publication points to the department with which authors currently are associated. This methodological change might be particularly useful because the reputation of departments is dependent upon, among other things, the reputation of its faculty members.

Second, the conclusions reached in any one of these studies is dependent upon the information provided about authors. The amount, and accuracy, of this information varies widely among journals. Some journals, for example, do not provide adequate information about whether or not the author of an article is at a branch campus. Others do not provide information about the author's department. These differences in information about the author(s) inherently reduce the accuracy of the coding.

Third, the conclusions are also affected somewhat by the journals selected for review. This problem is particularly acute in communication because our scholars publish a considerable amount of research in other disciplines' journals. On the other hand, no list of journals could possible be complete. Studies of this nature, however, should have defensible criteria for the journals selected for inclusion.

Fourth, the utility of this information in evaluating departments would be improved by evaluating the quality of the journal. While none of the studies in this discipline have included this variable, other disciplines have rated the quality of the journals in which researchers published as well as the raw number of publications (Bazley & Nikolai, 1975; Coe & Weinstock,

1984; Weber & Stevenson, 1981). Thus, future research should rate the quality of journals in the communication discipline.

Additionally, future research could divide the field into specializations similar to those used in studies surveying researchers' perceptions of doctoral programs (Edwards & Barker, 1984). This procedure might also assist potential students in the evaluation of graduate programs.

Overall, while this approach to the evaluation of communication programs is somewhat simplistic, it does provide some objective evaluation of the relative amounts of research produced by departments. The amount of research, of course, is one indicator of the relative quality of communication departments. This particular indicator does not have the "halo effect" and previous survey biases cited by Edwards and Barker (1984) in their limitation section. Furthermore, since publishing is only one indicator of the quality of a department, these results cannot be taken as definitive.

In extending findings on the measurement of departmental publications and the amount of departmental research, this paper reached three major conclusions. First, a weighted system for assigning publication points produced results nearly identical to results produced by an unweighted system for assigning publication points. Second, a comparison of this study's results with similar studies indicates that the number of publications from a department changes over time. Thus, results from studies such as this one are useful for only a brief period of time. Finally, research and publication are associated with departments that have graduate programs.

Notes

[1] There are two methodological problems with performing comparisons among these studies. First, McCallum (1984) lists both Pennsylvania State University and The Pennsylvania State University in the 25 most productive schools. Conversations with her determined that both of these references were to the University Park Campus of Penn State. Thus, her results were combined and the rankings adjusted accordingly before any analyses were performed. Second, and perhaps most importantly, the three lists differ not only in terms of placement of a department but also in inclusion of a department, a problem that would exist even if the complete lists of all three studies were compared. Thus, schools not listed in the top 25 of the McCallum and Barker et al. (1979) studies, but listed in this study were given a rank of 25 for the McCallum study and a rank of 26 for the Barker et al. study before statistical analyses were performed. (McCallum actually listed only 24 schools). A similar procedure was used to compare the McCallum study with the Barker et al. study. This procedure artificially inflates the results of the rho statistics.

[2] Students who had found employment with another department were credited with the publication as a member of the department at which they were employed and students who were no longer associated with a communication department were not credited. Thus, research conducted at one institution might well be assigned to another institution. This artifact, therefore, reduces the number of publication points awarded to students.

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Table 1

28 Most Productive Schools

Rank	School	Points
1	Purdue University--West Lafayette	29.88
2	Michigan State University	21.83
3	University of Wisconsin--Madison	19.17
4	University of Washington	18.50
5	Pennsylvania State University--University Park	18.33
6	University of Illinois--Urbana Champaign	17.17
7	Northwestern University	17.00
8	University of Texas--Austin	15.58
9	University of Iowa	14.50
10	Ohio State University	14.42
11	University of Delaware	14.00
12	West Virginia University	13.58
13	University of California--Davis	13.17
14	Texas Tech University	11.17
15	University of Nebraska--Lincoln	11.00
16	University of Indiana--Bloomington	10.75
17	University of North Carolina--Chapel Hill	10.50
18	University of Kansas	9.50
19	Cleveland State University	9.33
20 (tie)	University of Utah	8.33
20 (tie)	University of Southern California	8.33
22	University of Georgia	8.25
23	Kent State University	8.17
24	State University of New York--Albany	7.83
25 (tie)	University of Minnesota	7.17
25 (tie)	University of Massachusetts	7.17
25 (tie)	University of New Mexico	7.17
28	University of Pittsburgh	7.00

Table 2

Most Productive Schools for Student Papers

Rank	School	Points
1	University of Wisconsin-Madison	9.00
2	Purdue University-West Lafayette	8.00
3	Michigan State University	5.33
4	University of Washington	4.00
5	Ohio State University	3.25
6 (tie)	University of Iowa	2.50
6 (tie)	University of Utah	2.50
8	University of Texas-Austin	2.33
9 (tie)	University of Denver	2.00
9 (tie)	University of Kansas	2.00
9 (tie)	University of Massachusetts	2.00
9 (tie)	Northwestern University	2.00
9 (tie)	University of Pittsburgh	2.00